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LAYS *for* LITTLE CHAPS







"THE LITTLE CHAP THAT RUNS THE HOUSE"



# Lays for Little Chaps

BY

ALFRED JAMES WATERHOUSE

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*To Ruth and Dorothy*



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## THE LITTLE CHAP THAT RUNS THE HOUSE

**T**HE little chap that runs the house,  
He is a sight to see ;  
His face is as a saucer round ;  
He reacheth to my knee.

But when he shouts at me, "Hey, there !"  
I know 't were wisdom to beware.

The little chap that runs the house  
Hath noises many score,  
And when I think I've learned them all  
He springeth several more.  
Yells, whoops and shrieks to Bedlam run —  
He sayeth only : "My ! What fun !"

Sometimes when I awhile would write  
In some secluded spot

## *Lays for Little Chaps*

---

A-sudden Panic's frenzied might  
Doth mingle in my plot :  
With blare of trumpet, beat of drum,  
"Say, ain't you glad 'cause I have come?"

The little chap that runs the house  
Doth never pause to dream .  
That "business" is a sacred word  
In man's sagacious scheme.  
"Up on your shoulder! Take me! Do!"  
We march to shriek and mad halloo.

The little chap that runs the house  
When daylight all hath fled  
Doth rub his sleepy eyes, and say :  
"I fink I'll go to bed."  
Then by his mother kneeleth he,  
And angels heed his baby plea.

The little chap		that runs the house,
His noise is		dear to me,
For shriek and		shout and loud
halloo		
Are tuned to		Heaven's key ;
And so I say :		"God give him
joy,		
And heed his		way, my little
boy."		





CHARLIE JONES'  
BAD LUCK

*As discussed by  
little Willie*

**I** DON'T care if Charlie Jones  
Is better 'an I be ;  
An' I don't care if teacher says  
He 's smart 'long side er me ;  
An' I don't care, w'en vis'tors come,  
If she on him does call ;  
He ain't got measles, like I have —  
He don't have luck at all.

He never had the whoopin' cough,  
Ner mos' cut off his thumb,  
Ner ever fell an' broke his leg  
An' had a doctor come.  
He hardly ever stubs his toe,  
An' if he does, he 'll bawl !  
There 's nuthin' special comes to him —  
He don't have luck at all.

*Lays for Little Chaps*

---

An' I don't care if he can say  
More tex's an' things 'an I;  
He never burnt both hands to once  
'Long 'bout the Fo'th July.  
He never had the chicken pox,  
Ner p'isen oak — las' Fall!  
He can't be proud o' nuthin' much —  
He don't have luck at all.





A PASSENGER FROM PHANTOM  
LAND

A PASSENGER came from Phantom  
Land ;

Ho and oho ! but a sight was he !  
With a voice that was merely a loud demand

For something to eat or to drink maybe.

A passenger came from Phantom Land ;

A queerer and quainter you never have seen,  
With a mite of a foot and a bit of a hand,

And I vow he was only a crying machine.

But it 's ho and oho ! for the passengers all !

Pudgy and funny and dimpled  
and small,

Who know just enough for their  
mammias to call —

Here 's to them, wherever  
they be !



## *Lays for Little Chaps*

---

A passenger came from Phantom Land,  
His baggage forgotten and left behind.  
He had n't a stocking in which to stand,  
And he could n't have stood if he had, you  
mind.



He had n't a coat to his blessed name ;  
He had n't a garment : he had n't a thing.  
But, worse than all that — and I count it a  
shame —  
His hair and his teeth he 'd forgotten to bring.

But it's ho and oho ! for the passengers queer !  
The little wee despots, we welcome them here.  
The greater the tyrant, the more he is dear —  
Here's to them, wherever they be !

A passenger came from Phantom Land.  
The customs officials all passed him by.  
He had n't a thing they could touch on hand ;  
There's never a tax on an animate cry.

*A Passenger from Phantom Land*

---

But one there was greeted him, greeted him  
here

With a kiss and a prayer that the Father  
heard,

For these little passengers still are dear,

Though pudgy and useless and quaint and  
absurd.

So it's ho and oho! for the passengers wee!

They are dear unto you, and they're dear unto  
me.

Each care that they bear is a blessing, you see —

God bless them, wherever they be!





### OUR HUSHABY SONG

**I** SING to my baby a hushaby song ;  
She sings to her dolly a lullaby too.  
“ Oh, hush you,” I sing, “ for the sleep  
angels throng,”  
But she singeth only, “ Er-goo ” and “ Er-  
goo.”  
“ Oh, hush you, my dearie.  
Through all of the day  
The little feet weary,  
Wherever they stray.  
Now white angels gather  
In Sleep Country fair,  
Each sent by the Father  
To welcome you there.”



## *Our Hushaby Song*

---

So lowly I sing the even shades through,  
While she singeth only, "Er-goo" and "Er-goo."

She sings to her baby ; I sing to my own.

But she singeth sweeter whate'er I may do,  
For in all of life's music there soundeth no  
tone

So sweet as a bairnie's contented "Er-goo."

"So hush you, my dearie.

The little stars peep,

With eyes that are cheery,

To guard you, asleep ;

And peeping, down-peeping,

Full lowly they say :

'O'er Sleep's river creeping,

One cometh this way.'"

One murmured "Er-goo :"

the elves nearer

creep,

And baby and dolly have

both gone to sleep.





### THE BABY IN PANTS

**H**E'S a little bit of baby,  
'Bout as tall as pa's silk hat,  
An' as chubby as a cherub,  
An' you know how chubby 's that.  
Yistuday my ma, she said she  
Guessed she 'd put him into pants;  
An' all other sights that 's funny, —  
They ain't more 'n a circumstance.

Uncle William, he jus' hollered,  
'Cause the baby looked so queer;  
An' my ma she jus' kep' sayin':  
"B'ess him! pootsy-wootsy dear."  
But my pa, he wan't so tickled —  
Anyways, he kep' it hid —  
Fer he said: "Fer lan's sake, Ellen,  
W'at you done to that there kid?"

## *The Baby in Pants*

---

But the baby, he stood wond'rin',  
Kind o' smilin' in the sun,  
An' it seemed the brightest sunbeams  
Come to kiss the little one.  
An' he looked so sweet an' cunnin',  
Standin' where the sunrays glance,  
That my pa says: "I guess, Ellen,  
That we 'll let him keep them pants."





## THE LAND OF THREE FEET HIGH

**I**N the Land of Three Feet High  
Very many wonders be ;  
Castles reaching to the sky,  
Elfin-haunts in vale or lea ;  
Fairy boats that ceaseless ply  
O'er the Sea of Three Feet High.

There are giants, very tall ;  
Goblins playing in the dell ;  
Brownies, queerest folk of all ;  
More, ah, more than I can tell ;  
And I sometimes pause and sigh  
For the Land of Three Feet High.

## *The Land of Three Feet High*

---

And the people, who are they ?

Lads and lasses whom we know ;  
But beside them, where they stray,

We may never, never go.

We have wandered, you and I,  
From the Land of Three Feet High.





### LITTLE WILLIE'S CHRISTMAS WISH

**S**ANTA CLAUS, he brought me a great  
big drum.

Orto hear me play it ! Bet I make it  
hum !

Brought my cousin Charlie an engine with a  
bell

An' a reg'lar whistle that 'll almos' yell.

Brought the other fellers nices' kind o' toys ;

Hootin', tootin', shootin', makin' lots o' noise.

But when the fellers visit me — they do mos'  
ev'ry day —

It's orful diserpointin' what my pa 'll say.

Toot, hoot, toot !

Bang, slam, bang !

*Little Willie's Christmas Wish*

---

Wile pa gits red an' redder, an' says: "Well,  
I'll be hang!"

But ma says: "William Johnson! Such language to employ!

Have you forgotten that you once was jus' a little boy?"

An' pa says: "S'posin' if I was, this fac' is no less true:

I did n't have a license then to be a pirit, too."

What's the use of Santa Claus if boys can't play

Without their pas a-gittin' red an' talkin' in that way?

Never was no fellers 'at are better 'an we be;

Jus' a-playin' with the things he brought to them an' me.

Tootin' with the whistle, shootin' with the gun,  
Blowin' of the trumpet, havin' lots of fun.

Shootin' at a targit, shot my pa instead —

Orful diserpoin'tin' what my pa then said.

Ting-a-ling-ling!

Toot-er-toot-too!

Till pa says: "Oh, blame Santa Claus! I guess 'at that'll do!"

### *Lays for Little Chaps*

---

An' he ketches me an' Charlie an' yanks us to  
the door ;  
An' the fellers say they'll never come to play  
with me no more.  
An' that is why I'm wishin', an' so I told my  
ma,  
That Santa Claus 'll bring me nex' a bran' new  
pa.







W'EN I AM  
GROWED UP

**W**'EN I am growed up an' am quite a  
big man  
I 'll go with a cirkis, I guess, ef I  
can —

An' I proberbly can — an' I s'pose 'at I 'll be  
A clown er a ringmaster gorjus to see,  
An' I 'll act in a tent on mos' ev'ry night,  
An' the folks 'll say, "Goodness! 'at feller's a  
sight!"

An' they 'll yell an' hurrah jus' es loud es they  
can —

W'en I am growed up an' am quite a big man.

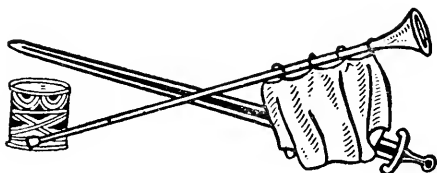
W'en I am growed up an' am quite — I don'  
know,

Fer sometimes I think 'at to sea I will go,

### *Lays for Little Chaps*

---

An' I'll be a bold pirit, to sail the seas through  
An' capture the ships as the pirts all do,  
Er a street-car conductor, er brave engineer,  
Er runnin' a candy-store mos' of the year —  
But ma says to make me a preacher's her plan,  
W'en I am growed up an' am quite a big man.



## *Saint Santa Claus*

---



### SAINT SANTA CLAUS

I ASKED a little girl one day  
Which saint she liked the best ;  
“ Saint Peter, or Saint Paul ? ” I said,  
“ Or which one of the rest ? ”

And straight she answered me : “ Zere ’s one  
‘ I likes the best, betoz ” —

Faith ! how I longed to kiss her then ! —

“ He ’s dood — Saint Santy Tlaus.”

Ho, all ye ones whose heads and hearts

Have frosted with the years ;

So frozen that for childish faith

You ’ve nothing left save sneers,

*Lays for Little Chaps*

---

You'd better let your hearts thaw out  
By genial nature's laws,  
For she was right, the little maid :  
"He's dood — Saint Santy Tlaus."





THE REMARKABLE TALE  
OF MISS KITTY CAT

**L**ITTLE Miss Kitty Cat climbed my  
knee  
Last night as I sat by the fire,  
And her eyes were as green as green could be,  
(Oh, she was a wonderful sight to see !)  
And her hairs were just like wire,  
This thin and singular wire.

But I stroked her gently, I stroked her long,  
Till her eyes grew yellow again,  
And she sung me the most *remarkable* song ;  
The tune went just pur-r-ring and pur-r-ring  
along  
Till she 'd sung it thrice over, and then  
She sung it all over again.

*Lays for Little Chaps*

---

And I wrote down that song just as fast as I  
could,

For I knew that you wanted to hear,  
And I said to myself that you certainly should —  
That is, if you're 'specially, 'specially good —

And here is its story. Dear! Dear!

A curious story, 't is clear.

“It was only this evening” — so Kitty Cat  
sung —

“That I walked in a wood where bad doggies  
hung

By their necks to the limbs of the trees,

And I laughed as they swung in the breeze;  
For I've always insisted — 't was plain unto  
me —

That the place for a dog is the limb of a tree,

The limb of a very tall tree,

Where good little kitties can see

How their bow-wows are choked, unless they're  
of tin,

And that cannot be, for they'd have whistles in,  
And the dogs when they barked would just  
whistle instead,

And I never have heard them; no, never!” she  
said,

*The Remarkable Tale of Miss Kitty Cat*

---

“And I really don’t think it can be ;  
Do you ?” said Miss Kitty to me,  
“But I *wish* I could see such a tree,  
A tree,  
Such a wonderful, *beautiful* tree.

“There were bright yellow birds in that mar-  
vellous wood,  
And they flew to my feet from the trees, as  
they should,  
And, ‘Eat us ; come eat us,’ they sung ;  
(I’m acquainted, you know, with their  
tongue)  
And the mice all came running as fast as they  
could,  
Saying, ‘Please eat us *first*,’ and I told them I  
would ;  
I surely and certainly would,  
For mice are especially good.  
Then the mice brought me forks, and the birds  
brought me knives,  
And they all said at once, ‘Please commence on  
our wives,  
For we love them *so* much, and we’d give you  
our best,  
And perhaps when they’re eaten you’ll want a  
long rest.

*Lays for Little Chaps*

---

Oh, they 're *much* better eating, you see,  
Said those dear, loving husbands to me.  
Oh, I wish that such blisses could be,  
    Could be,  
Could *surely* and *certainly* be!

“ But, while I was thinking of eating a  
    mouse,  
I happened to notice a queer little house,  
    And out came a man with a gun,  
    And he said, ‘ I will limit your fun,’  
And he shot a queer bullet made out of Dutch  
    cheese,  
And I shouted, ‘ *Don’t*, Mister! Oh, *don’t*, if  
    you *please* !’  
    Oh, I hope you will certainly please.  
    Can’t you see I am weak in the knees? ’  
But the queer bullet chased me eight times  
    ’round a tree,  
And ’t was gaining quite fast, as I could n’t but  
    see,  
And I wanted to pray, but ‘ Now I lay me ’  
Did n’t seem quite appropriate then, don’t you  
    see?  
And a flutter got into my heart,  
And it seemed that it surely must part;



## *The Remarkable Tale of Miss Kitty Cat*

---

And I *waked* with a terrible start,  
A start,  
And I jumped in your lap with that start.”  
So that is the story Miss Kitty Cat sung,  
As she lay on my lap last night,  
And, as I’m well acquainted with Kitty Cat’s  
tongue,  
I know I have written it right ;  
And I’ve written it all for a wee little one  
Who is dear, oh, so dear unto me,  
And if it shall please her, now that it is done,  
I’ll be amply repaid, don’t you see ?  
And there ’s one little thing that I almost forgot :  
Do you see what the moral is, dears ?  
Did you know what I meant, though you’d  
much rather not,  
When I wrote of Miss Kitty Cat’s fears ?  
Did you see ? You did not ? Well, perhaps  
it ’s not queer,  
Though it well may appear  
so to many,  
For to me it is really remark-  
ably clear  
That the story, you know,  
has n’t any.





WHEN THE BABY CAME

**W**HEN the baby came that the white  
stork brings,  
Such a queer little baby was he,  
The quaintest and cutest of laughable things,  
He was really a marvel to see,  
For he puckered his brow, and he twisted his  
eyes,  
And first he looked simple and then he looked  
wise,  
And the way that he wailed would cause you  
surprise.  
It was surely surprising to me,  
You see ;  
It was more than surprising to me.

## *When the Baby Came*

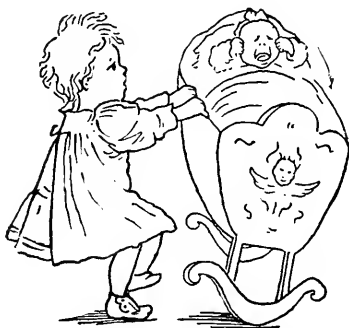
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When the baby came 't was his grandma said :

“ I'm sure that he looks like his ma ; ”

But his Aunt Angelina insisted, instead :

“ I'm certain he favors his pa.”



But the baby he wriggled his little red toes,  
And he wailed that he wanted to get in his  
clothes,

Which was perfectly proper, as you may suppose,  
For he 'd left all his clothing afar

In the star

Where all of the wee babies are.

When the baby came there was somebody said :

“ May the Father my little one bless ; ”

And a kiss, like a blessing, fell soft on the head  
Of the darling she yearned to caress.

*Lays for Little Chaps*

---

But the baby he heeded nor blessing nor prayer,  
As he blinked at the light with a meaningless  
stare ;

Yet I'm sure the petition was registered where  
There is One who is able to bless,  
And I guess  
That in answer He stooped to caress.



## THE BABY'S REMARKS

**T**HERE is nobody knows the things I  
think ;

There is nobody knows, I guess,  
As I lie in my crib and blink and blink,  
With my wee little brain a-kink, a-kink

With the notions I can't express.  
There is nobody knows what I try to say,  
As I lie in my crib and talk this way :

Goo, goo, goo, goo —

A toe is a thing to eat —

Goo, goo, goo, goo —

It's really remarkably sweet.

## *Lays for Little Chaps*

---

The nurse took a sticking thing one day  
And pinned a jacket to me.  
I am not a talker, but I do say  
That I made them take it away, away,  
For I cried, and I cried, you see.  
There is nobody knows what I say, no doubt,  
But I notice they got that sticker out.

Goo, goo, goo, goo —  
I guess that my head I'll bump —  
Goo, goo, goo, goo —  
When I do, watch the big nurse jump.



## *A Hard, Hard Citizen*

---



### A HARD, HARD CITIZEN

**Y**OU'RE a hard, hard citizen." So I  
said,  
And he freely admitted that it was so.  
"You turned my mucilage into the bed,  
But rubbed some part in your hair, you know.  
You hid my slippers and then forgot,  
And the place where you put them still  
puzzles me.  
You're a hard, hard citizen, are you not?"  
And he smiled as he answered, "Yeth, I be."

"The faucet you turned of the coal-oil can,  
Till the floor was drenched by the oily flow;  
And you chuckled in glee as the liquid ran.  
Now answer me straightly: Is n't it so?"  
But the criminal neither did shudder nor shrink,  
As he murmured, "A 'tory p'ease tell to me."  
"You're a hard, hard citizen, don't you think?"  
I said, and he smiled as he said, "I be."

## *Lays for Little Chaps*

---

“Your grammar is faulty I’d fain suggest,”  
I said to the criminal on my knees;  
“It would not endure the least critical test;”  
And he answered, “Now tell me a tory,  
p’ease.”

Now what could I do? — I leave it to you —  
For he’s callous in guilt as the worst of the  
lot,  
And that he seems hardened is dreadfully  
true —

So I told him the story. Now, would you not?

I told him the story, and then I said:  
“You’re a hard, hard citizen, one can see,”  
And he answered, “I be,” and then he pled:  
“Now p’ease, won’t oo tell ’nuzzer tory to  
me?”

Oh, I guess that my discipline’s sadly at fault,  
For I told him a story, the peace to keep,  
And he murmured low, when I seemed to halt:  
“Now tell me anuzzer,” then went to sleep.







THE LAND OF THE HUSHABY  
KING

**O**H, safely afloat in a wonderful boat,  
From over the Sundown Sea,  
When the tide swings slow and the  
breeze chants low

In marvellous minstrelsy,  
There cometh, there cometh the Hushaby King,  
And dreams are the elves that creep  
Close, close by his side on the Sundown tide,  
As he singeth my babe to sleep :

“By, oh! — by, by, — we shall go sailing,  
sailing ;  
Swing low, swing high, over the Dream Sea  
trailing,

*Lays for Little Chaps*

---

With elves of the Dreamland about us a-wing."  
This is the song of the Hushaby King.

Oh, little blue eyes, the stars in the skies  
Of the Dreamland are strangely aglow,  
And the moon is the queen of a fairyland  
scene,

To watch o'er the children below ;  
And your boat 'mid the islands swings lazily  
o'er

Where the mermaids in happiness throng,  
And, down where they dwell, 'neath the surge  
and the swell,

They are singing a lullaby song :

"Sleep, dear ; sleep, sleep, rocked on the rest-  
tide billow ;

While near creep, creep, elves to thy downy  
pillow ;

You shall be soothed by the flutter of wings."  
This is the song that the mermaiden sings.

Oh, the far-away strand of the Hushaby Land

Your little white feet shall press,  
And the birds of the air shall welcome you  
there

To blisses no mortal may guess.

*The Land of the Hushaby King*

---

On wonderful trees shall the candy-fruit grow ;  
Plum cake to the bushes shall cling ;  
And no one shall cry, " Don't touch them !  
My, my !"  
For the dream-fairies ever will sing :

" Yours all, yours, dear ; all to be had for the  
taking ;  
Babes small, babes queer, just give the trees a  
good shaking ;  
For candy in Dreamland 's a very good thing."  
This is the song that the white fairies sing.

Oh, far-away strand of the Hushaby Land,  
If I could but go, could go  
Where my baby doth float in the Lullaby-boat ;  
If I could her rapture know  
As she laughs in a dream that comes through  
the night,  
A dream of the elfins at play !  
But she drifteth from me o'er the Hushaby Sea,  
And aye to myself I say :

" By, oh !— by, by,— bonnie one, drifting,  
drifting ;  
Swing low, swing high, safe on the sleep-tide  
shifting."

*Lays for Little Chaps*

---

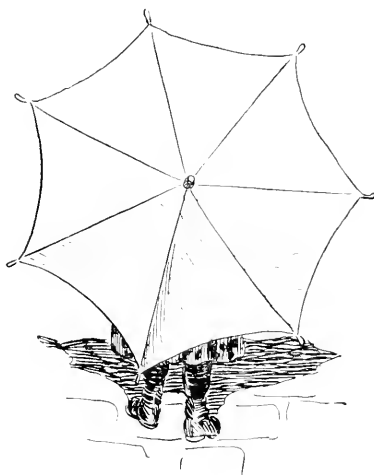
And my heart doth reply, though closer I  
cling :

“She is safe in the arms of the Hushaby  
King.”



## *A Very Queer Umbrella*

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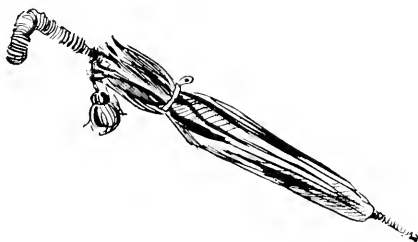
### A VERY QUEER UMBRELLA

**T**HIS very morn, upon the street,  
A big umbrella I did meet.  
At first I thought it walked alone,  
Though such a thing I'd never known;  
And then — my pencil pardon begs —  
I saw it walked on two plump legs.  
So strange a sight filled me with awe,  
And so I peeped beneath and saw —

### *Lays for Little Chaps*

---

Saw two bright eyes that laughed to mine ;  
Saw two cheeks, red as sun-born wine ;  
A tiny mouth, just fit to kiss ;  
Two dimples, Cupid's home of bliss ;  
A forehead white, with locks of gold —  
Ah, I am sad and gray and old,  
And much I wished — my heart 's so lone —  
That queer umbrella were my own.





## FELLOW CAME TO OUR HOUSE

**F**ELLOW came to our house and said he  
guessed he 'd stay ;  
Dreadful inconvenient to let him have  
his way —

Had no room for boarders, did n't have a bed —  
Tried to argue with him, and this is what I  
said :

“ Hey, there, little chap,  
Come and visit me !  
Humpty-bumpty, jumpty-dumpty  
On your father's knee !

## *Lays for Little Chaps*

---

Have you made arrangements  
To pay for board and cheer?  
You'll find them unavailing,  
For we don't take boarders here."

But though my argument was sound, as I submit to you,  
I think he meant that he would stay when he replied, "Goo-oo!"

Fellow came to our house, and some one talked this way:

"He's such a itty-witty that I guess we'll let him stay."

I could n't see the logic, but she pressed the tiny head

Still closer to her bosom, and this is what she said:

"Itty-bitty felly!

B'essed baby boy!

Come to b'ess his mamma,

Come to b'ing her joy!"

And then a tear down-starting

Her loving glances blurred;

But her lips kept moving, moving,

Though she did n't say a word.

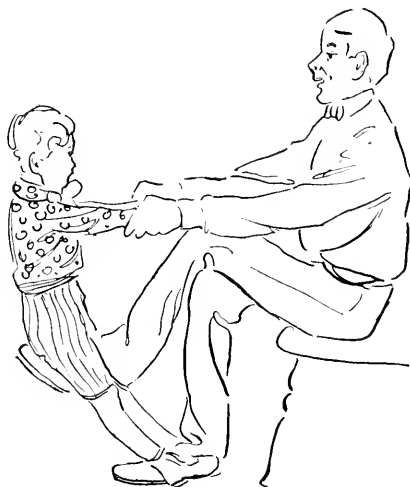


*Fellow Came to our House*

---

And I knew a prayer she offered — and an  
angel heard it, too ;  
But the baby nestled closer and only said,  
“Goo-oo!”





### HOW THE BABIES RIDE

**H**ERE'S the way the babies ride :  
High-low, high-low,  
Sitting their papa's foot astride —  
High-low, high-low.

First they go up, and then they go down,  
Shrieking with laughter, their fears to drown.  
Oh, but the horse deserves renown ! —  
High-low, high-low.

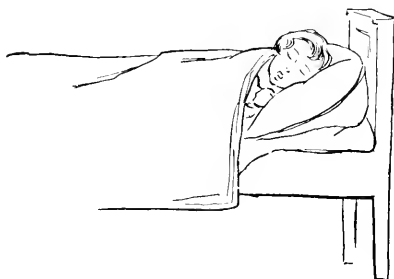
## *How the Babies Ride*

---

Here 's the way the babies ride :

By-low, by-low,  
Floating away on the Dream Sea tide —  
By-low, by-low.

Safe where the Sleep-boat lazily swings,  
Dreaming of beautiful, wonderful things,  
Lulled by the song that Somebody sings :  
By-low, by-low.





### O'ER THE SEA OF DREAMS

O'ER the Sea of Dreams to the sweet  
Dreamland —  
Oh, little my love, come hither, I pray,  
And place in my own your wee white hand,  
And we will go sailing away, away,  
Down a path of gold by the Isles of Rest,  
O'er the slumbrous depths of the Sundown  
Sea,  
To the land of lands that we love the best,  
Where dream angels whisper to you and to  
me.

*O'er the Sea of Dreams*

---

O'er the Sea of Dreams — Oh, little my love,  
Closer yet creep to this heart of mine,  
While lowly the dream angels hover above  
And there in God's meadows the star-blos-  
soms shine.

Under your eyelids the visions shall creep —  
Little one, little one, what shall they be?  
Something to cause you to smile in your sleep,  
Nestling yet closer and closer to me.

O'er the Sea of Dreams to the sweet Dream-  
land —

Oh, little my love, what dreams they must be!  
Such dreams as a baby may understand;  
Queer little fancies, as all must agree;  
Little half notions, or foolish or wise;  
Wee floating fragments of babyhood lore.  
These are your dreams, as I sagely surmise —  
Heigh-ho, my little one, what are mine more?

O'er the Sea of Dreams; and who's at the  
helm,

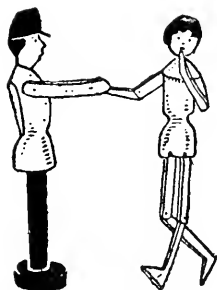
Oh, little my love, nor you nor I  
May wisely tell, for the Sleep King's realm  
Is hidden by mists from the passers-by.

*Lays for Little Chaps*

---

It is hidden by mists, yet myself I tell,  
While your eyelids flutter like petals of  
white,  
The One who is guiding will guide her well —  
So, little my love, good-night, good-night.





THE SCHOOLGIRL THAT I HATED

SOMETIMES when memory draws the  
    veil, and I look back a way  
To where the sun was shining in my  
    happy, youthful day,  
I catch the scent of lilacs as they blossomed by  
    our door,  
And I hear the robins chirping as they used to  
    chirp of yore,  
And the oriole is flitting like a ball of living fire,  
And the river 's sort o' whispering just as though  
    't would never tire ;  
And then, amid the faces that on memory's  
    screen I see,  
Comes the schoolgirl that I hated when she sat  
    in front of me.

*Lays for Little Chaps*

---

Someway I see her plainly now in scanty dress  
of blue,  
With eyes in part coquettish and in part serene  
and true ;  
With curls that liked to catch the light and  
twist it in and out,  
And lips just right for kissing, if they were in-  
clined to pout.  
I knew that she was pretty, but I said she was  
no good —  
Though I could n't help admiring her ; no boy  
that 's human could —  
But she made up faces at me, and she could a  
vixen be,  
The schoolgirl that I hated when she sat in front  
of me.

She would n't play at marbles, and she could n't  
play at ball,  
And I often intimated that she was no good at  
all.  
I dropped a cricket down her back in cheerful,  
boyish way,  
And she yelled first ; then I yelled next, when  
teacher was to pay.  
She would n't " coon " a melon, though I asked  
her oftentimes,



## *The Schoolgirl that I Hated*

---

And she ridiculed my first attempts at poor and  
broken rhymes.

Oh, she was a thorough failure, as any boy can  
see,

The schoolgirl that I hated when she sat in front  
of me.

She beat me at the lessons that we found within  
our books,

And when she went above me all scornful were  
her looks ;

But when the teacher whipped me I saw her  
cry one day,

And I said that " girls is better  
than what some fellers  
say ; "

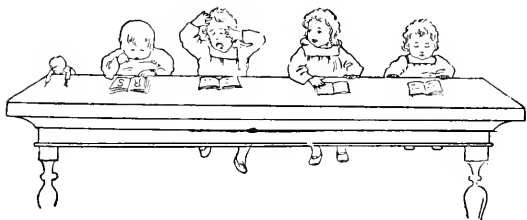
And I sort of half forgave her for  
her lack of hardihood,

Though I even then insisted that  
she really was no good ;

But times have changed since  
then, for I — I 'm mar-  
ried, don't you see,

To the schoolgirl that I hated  
when she sat in front of  
me.





### MY ORFUL CROSS-EYED TEACHER

**O**NE time I had a teacher — I've had  
them every kind,  
But this partic'lar teacher was dis-  
tractin' to my mind.  
Of course all sorts of teachers is disturbin' to a  
boy,  
For they 're always interferin' when he wants to  
have some joy ;  
But this partic'lar teacher he was worser than  
the rest,  
For there wan't no way of figgerin' on the im-  
pulse in his breast,  
An' when he looked mos' pensive, then he'd  
light upon me hot,  
My orful cross-eyed teacher what I never have  
forgot.

*My Orful Cross-eyed Teacher*

---

There wa'n't no way accountin' for the vag'ries  
of that man;  
There wa'n't no cunnin' little boy could quite  
foresce his plan.  
With his eyes both turned on heaven, he 'd seem  
about to pray,  
An' then you 'd best go mighty slow; he 'd  
prob'ly come your way;  
An' when his eyes seemed sot an' fixed some-  
where about his toe,  
Then, if you pinched another boy, you gen'ly  
stood no show,  
For he 'd prob'ly land upon you, or he would as  
like as not,  
This orful cross-eyed teacher what I never have  
forgot.

One time that I remember, I remember very  
well,  
I wrote a note to Ethel Moore, my longin' love  
to tell;  
An' the teacher he was gazin' on the far-off,  
promised land,  
So I fired that note at Ethel — well, it landed  
in his hand;  
An' from the subsekent events I smarted fore  
an' aft,

*Lays for Little Chaps*

---

An' my heart it also smarted when I noticed  
Ethel luffed.

Oh, he wrenched my young affections an' he  
jarred my spine a lot,  
That orful cross-eyed teacher what I never have  
forgot.

I throwed a wad at Charlie Jones when  
teacher's eyes was cast

Upon a boss an' wagon that jus' then the win-  
der passed.

Of the epersode that follered I am still ashamed  
to tell,

For the teacher used his ruler, an' I — I used  
a yell.

He was a diserpointin' chap, that pederagog, I  
swear,

An' when he looked straight at a thing he  
was n't lookin' there.

Because of him my youthful days was triberla-  
tion-shot,

This orful cross-eyed teacher what I never have  
forgot.

Oh, good an' noble little boys what still by  
school are vexed,

## *My Orful Cross-eyed Teacher*

---

If you will listen to my words I'll surely put  
you "next,"  
For one day a glad discovery sung a siren song  
to me :  
When the teacher looked right at me, what I  
did he did n't sec.  
Oh, good an' noble little boys who watch the  
master's nod,  
When the cross-eyed teacher 's lookin', then 's  
the time to fire the wad.  
This grain of wisdom garnered served to cheer  
my weary lot  
With the orful cross-eyed teacher what I never  
have forgot.





“I LOVE YOU EACH YEAR  
BETTER ”

**I**’M twelve years old to-day,” she said,  
I kissed and held her nearer,  
For every year that onward fled  
Had made her but the dearer.  
“I’m growing quite a girl, you see,” —  
My hand reached out to pet her —  
“But then, you know, it seems to me  
I love you each year better.”

*“ I Love You Each Year Better ”*

---

Now tell me, you who sup with care  
As time grows old and older,  
Could lips a sweeter message bear  
When hearts with age turn colder?  
So, little love, my soul shall pray,  
As years our life-links fetter,  
That I may always hear you say :  
“ I love you each year better.”





## HOW THE FLOWERS GROW

**D**O you know, darling, how pansies  
grow?

God takes the tints of the sunset  
glow,

The purple that floats in the mountain mist,

The blush of a maid by her love first kissed,

The blue that's asleep in the midday skies,

The brown that I love in my baby's eyes,

And He mingles them all in a flower; and so,

That is the way that the pansies grow.

Do you know, darling, how lilies grow?

God takes the soul of the beautiful snow

And moulds it into a chalice sweet,

Pure and wonderful, fair, complete;



## *How the Flowers Grow*

---

Then He takes the gold of my baby's hair  
And sets it amid the whiteness there,  
As in night's white skies the bright stars glow ;  
And that is the way that the lilies grow.

Do you know, darling, how roses grow ?  
Ah, that is the strangest of all, I know ;  
For they are the fairest of all things fair,  
The one perfect blossom, beyond compare ;  
Symbol of sweetness and all loveliness —  
God wished His children to comfort and bless,  
And He wrote the thought in a flower ; and so,  
That is the way that the roses grow.





### MY YOUTHFUL PANTS

**C**OME back, come back, my youthful  
pants ;

Come back, come back to me,

For nevermore by any chance

Your equal I shall see.

My mother made them ; I recall

How wondrous was their fit,

For I was some six sizes small

Into the things to "git."

She made them out of father's pants ;

The bosom was his size.

## *My Youthful Pants*

---

The sight of me in them by chance  
Would fill you with surprise.  
They hung straight from my shoulder-blade  
In folds beyond belief,  
And when the eastern zephyrs played  
I had to take a reef.

And, oh, my youthful heart would swell  
Beneath the fearful brunt  
Of feeling that no one could tell  
Which side I wore in front.  
I still remember I would use  
The slack in carrying chips,  
And when to raise it I did choose  
My face was in eclipse.

And all the little boys I met  
Would, joyous, 'round me dance  
And cry in tones I can't forget :

“Where did you git them  
pants?”

Oh, trousers dear of long ago ;  
Oh, panties wild and free,  
Where you have gone I long  
to know !

Come back, come back to  
me !





## THE PEOPLE OF WONDER LAND

**H**AVE you ever heard tell of Wonder  
Land,  
Of the dear little, queer little, comical  
band

That stumble and fumble and want to know  
Where they are going and why they go?  
They sit in our laps as the eve grows dark,  
And they take the shape of a question mark,  
For all that is written in face or eye  
Is wholly expressed by the one word, "Why?"

"Why don't the sun burn up some day?"

"Why don't we fly, as the birdies do?"

"Why don't the chickens and hens eat hay?"

## *The People of Wonder Land*

---

“Why do the scissors cut things in two?”  
Such are the questions of Wonder Land,  
Of its dear little, queer little, comical band.

These are the people of Wonder Land :  
Queer little duffers as tall as your stand.  
Wee little fellows who want to know  
More than the wisest can tell, I trow ;  
For the world is so big, and the world is so  
    strange ;  
Its paths are so hidden as onward they range,  
That who dares to wonder — ’t is surely not I —  
They look in amazement while questioning,  
    “ Why ? ”

“ Why are the stars put out in the day ? ”  
    “ Who is it lights them when night comes  
        down ? ”

“ Why don’t my ma have whiskers, I say ? ”  
    “ Why are the houses all built in town ? ”  
These are the things they cannot understand,  
The odd little people of Wonder Land.

Oh, little wee people of Wonder Land,  
There ’s one thing I wish you could understand :  
We folk who are older are not so wise  
We can answer the questions in your dear eyes ;

## *Lays for Little Chaps*

---

For really, you know — it is certainly true —  
In the Country of Wonder we live with you;  
And if any can answer, 't is surely not I,  
For I, too, am lost in the maze of "Why?"

Why have I come from the mists of There?

Why am I lost in the mists of Here?

What is the gain in the burden we bear?

What is the end that is glimmering near?

And if these be not questions of Wonder Land,  
The difference, my bairnies, I don't understand.





BUT TWO CHILDREN

**T**HEY grow so weary, the little feet,  
With their day-long, ceaseless  
hurry ;

So when there cometh the even' sweet

When we bury the haunting worry,

She patters to me, and, wistful eyed,

She says : " I am finkin' maybe

You 'll hold me to s'leep, an' my dolly beside,

Betause I am just oor baby."

Then I hold her a time, till her head droops low

And her soul creepeth out to the shadows ;

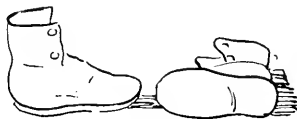
## *Lays for Little Chaps*

---

And she and her dolly together do go  
To the Dreamland's star-flecked meadows ;  
And, holding her so, I am glad to know  
She is safe from the outside weather ;  
And sometimes I say in a dreamy way :  
" We are but two children together."

We are but two children. At even' we  
Are wearied alike by the hurry,  
And we long for the rest that shall set us free  
From the daytime's care and worry.  
And as she creeps to her father's arms,  
Still holding her dolly near her,  
And as I guard her from all alarms  
And tenderly soothe and cheer her,

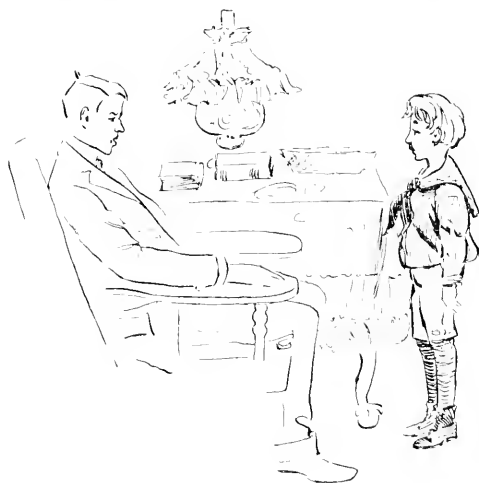
So do I turn, though I hold life's toys  
Closer and closer unto me,  
To the One who heedeth our woes and joys  
For rest and for strength to renew me ;  
And as my darling ne'er pleads in vain,  
With soft baby prattle, " P'ease hold me,"  
So do I whisper, through toil and through pain :  
" The arms of His love do enfold me."





## *My Pa an' Ma*

---



### MY PA AN' MA

**M**Y pa he is the wises' man, I s'pose,  
you ever seen ;

He knows jus' why mos' all things  
is, an' knows jus' what they mean.

He knows a heap more than my ma, 'cause he's  
a man, you see ;

He ain't a woman like she is, though tol'ble  
good to me ;

*Lays for Little Chaps*

---

But when I ask him questions 'bout the things  
I 'd like to know,  
He sort o' scowls at me at firs', an then he  
answers so :

“ Do go away !  
Don't bother me !  
I 'm busy now !  
Say, can't you see ? ”

But when I ask my ma, why, then she allers  
ans'ers me.  
I 'd learn a sight if she knew things almos' as  
well as he.

When pa an' Mr. Jones sits down an' talk an  
hour or less,  
I wish the Presiden' could hear : he 'd learn  
some things, I guess,  
'Bout why the country ain't worth shucks, an'  
why it orto be.  
My pa he makes them things so clear that even  
I can see.  
He proves how ever'thing should be, an' how  
it 's all amiss,  
But when I ask him questions, then he answers  
me like this :

*My Pa an' Ma*

---

“ Oh, run away,  
You foolish lad !  
Questions like yours  
Will drive me mad ! ”

But ma, she tells me all she knows, an' that  
much has to go.  
I wish she knew as much as pa, fer then I judge  
I 'd know.

An' yet my questions all is 'bout the things boys  
like to know.  
I asked him once, I recollect', why things I drop  
don't go  
Up in the air instead of down, the way they  
allers do ;  
An' once I asked if God gits tired of holdin'  
office, too,  
The way men never does, pa says. I ask such  
things as these,  
But pa, he scowls an' says, although I ask him  
with a “ please : ”

“ Oh, run away ! ” —  
An' then I 'm fired —  
“ Questions like yours  
Do make me tired ! ”

## *Lays for Little Chaps*

---

But ma, she ans'ers all she can, an' holds me to  
her breast.

I guess my pa does know the mos', but ma, she  
loves me best.





THE MOURNFUL TALE OF THE  
SNEE ZEE FAMILLEE

**T**HERE was a little yellow man whose  
name it was Ah Chen,  
And every time that Mongol sneezed  
he told his name to you.  
This funny little yellow man had wedded Tish  
Ah Chee,  
And they, when certain time had passed, had  
children one, two, three.  
There was little Ah Chen  
And Tish Ah Tsu,  
And the baby was named Ker Chee,  
And their Uncle Ker Chawl  
And his wife were all

*Lays for Little Chaps*

---

Of the Snee Zee fam-i-lee,  
And when the mama stood and called her chil-  
dren from the door,  
You would laugh and laugh for an hour and a  
half if never you laughed before.  
“Ah Chen,” she’d say in her feminine way,  
“bring in the little Ker Chee,  
And Tish Ah Tsu, bring him in, too, to the  
Snee Zee fam-i-lee.”

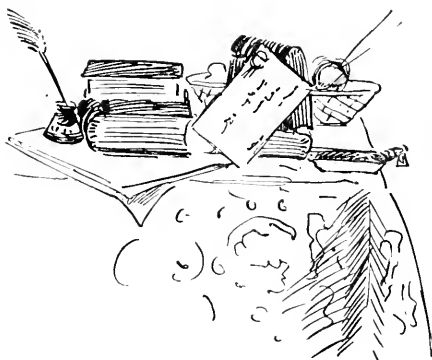
Alas and alack ! but my voice will crack as the  
mournful tale I tell.  
To that sweet little band in the Mongol land a  
terrible fate befell.  
On a summer day in a sportive way they called  
one another all,  
And over and o’er the names they bore they  
would call and call and call.  
They called Ah Chen  
And Tish Ah Tsu  
And the baby Ker Chee, Ker Chee,  
And their Uncle Ker Chawl,  
They called them all,  
Till they’re dead as the dead can be.  
Ah Chen was tough, and was used to snuff, so  
he lived at his fate to scoff,

*The Mournful Tale of the Sneezee Family*

---

But the rest are dead, as I've heretofore said,  
for their heads they were all sneezed off.  
And this is the tale I have tried to wail of Ah  
Cheu and his little Ker Chee  
And Tish Ah Tsu and Ah Chee, too, of the Sneezee  
Zee fam-i-lee.





“I’M PRAYING FOR YOU”

**T**HERE ’S a quaint little letter that lies  
on my stand,  
A quaint little letter in old-fashioned  
hand.

It is lacking somewhat in rhetorical grace,  
And its capital letters at times lose their place.  
It scarcely would bear the most critical test ;  
Yet of all correspondence I hold it the best,  
For it ends — ah, in love it was written all  
through :

“Remember, my boy, that I’m praying for you.”



*"I'm Praying for You"*

---

"Remember, my boy" — Oh, an old boy am I,  
With a head that shines back to the laugh of  
the sky,

But to her I'm "my boy," and I always will be  
Till the white angel steps 'twixt my mother and  
me,

And longer ; the love that has guarded my way  
I know will not cease at the close of the day,  
But will whisper me still from the infinite  
blue :

"Remember, my boy, that I'm praying for  
you."

"I'm praying for you" — God knows we all  
need

That some heart of love to the Father shall  
plead,

For our feet will but stumble on life's weary  
way,

And we frequently find that we're sadly astray.

We say to our spirits, "Be brave and press on,"

But the spirit will faint, and the soul will grow  
wan ;

And then comes the message, our strength to  
renew :

"Remember, my boy, that I'm praying for you."

## *Lays for Little Chaps*

---

Remember! Oh, mother, I could not forget;  
Still the dear, loving message my lashes will  
    wet,  
As I read it here written in old-fashioned hand  
In the quaint little letter that lies on my stand;  
And in fancy I see you, as often of old,  
When love kissed your face into beauty untold,  
As you knelt by my cot — With eyes strangely  
    dim,  
Your boy *does* remember you're praying for  
    him.





## THE LOVING MOTHER

**S**HE had been a loving mother and a very faithful wife ;  
She had reared their seven children and  
had fitted them for life,  
And through all their days of childhood she had  
taken little ease,  
For whene'er she thought of resting, it was,  
“ Mother, won't you please —

*Lays for Little Chaps*

---

“Won’t you please to fix my bonnet?”

“I say, mother, where’s my hat?”

“Put this piece of ribbon on it.”

“Won’t you fix my doll like that?”

So, from six o’clock of mornings until ten  
o’clock at night,

She hurried, as though resting were a thing that  
was n’t right ;

And they said, the while she wearied in the  
ceaseless toil and strife :

“She is such a loving mother, and she’s such a  
faithful wife !”

Of course they loved her greatly, as bairns and  
husband should ;

As she grew thin with slaving they would mur-  
mur, “She’s so good !”

But when, at times, a moment just for rest she  
fain would seize,

(Of course they were but thoughtless) it was,  
“Mother, won’t you please —

“Won’t you mend this hole? It’s shocking.”

“I say, Sarah, where’s that pail?”

“Won’t you please to fix this stocking?”

“Can’t you make my boat a sail?”

*The Loring Mother*

---

And so, by mending, cooking, and a thousand  
    labors pressed,  
She never quite could find the time to take the  
    needed rest.  
But e'er, as she grew thinner in the constant toil  
    of life,  
They said: "She's *such* a mother, and she's  
    such a faithful wife!"

One day this little woman felt sadly worn and  
    tired;  
She could n't labor for the rest, although she  
    still desired.  
They bore her tenderly to bed; she weakened  
    by degrees,  
And the house seemed half deserted with no  
    "Mother, won't you please —"

"Won't you please?" — The words unspoken  
    Yet she heard in fitful dreams,  
As they knew by many a token,  
    By the fever's prattled themes,

Till one morn the great white angel took her  
    gently to his breast,  
Whispering softly, "You have labored. Lo, I  
    give to you my rest."

### *Lays for Little Chaps*

---

Once she sighed, "How will they — manage?"  
Then she faded out of life.  
She was such a loving mother and was such a  
faithful wife.



Sometimes I close my eyes and try to dream of  
her at rest,  
And finding life is easy in the country of the  
blest ;  
But it's difficult to fancy, for in those white  
courts of ease  
Ofttimes, I judge, in dreams she hears, "Now,  
mother, won't you please —

*The Loring Mother*

---

“ Won’t you step down here a minute ;  
They can spare you up that way ?  
Here ’s this work ; I can’t begin it —  
I am needing you to-day.”

Then, perhaps, she starts, and whispers to some  
angel fair and white :

“ Oh, this resting’s pleasant, pleasant ; it is  
sweet, but is it — right ? ”

For how can she in a moment break the habit  
of a life ? —

She was such a loving mother and was such a  
faithful wife.



### THE DESPOT KINGS

**D**O you know of the Despot Kings that  
    stray  
    Out of the Land of the Far-Away  
Into the Country of Now and Here,  
Despots and tyrants all, but dear?  
Do you know the blink that means, "Obey!"  
And the midnight clamor that brings dismay  
To the subjects forlorn, who nathless spring  
To do the will of the Despot King?

Bundle of wriggles and wails and twists;  
    Vacant of face and eye;  
Helplessly beating with Lilliput fists —  
    Who doth the Kings defy?



## *The Despot Kings*

---

Once I was fief to a Despot King,  
And my heart bowed down like a broken  
thing,  
For he ordered me out when the night was  
chill,  
And I said, "I will not;" and he said, "You  
will!" —

Oh, spare me the tale that is old, so old,  
For ever and aye till the stars grow cold  
The children of men must tribute bring  
To the midnight throne of a Despot King.

Scanty in wisdom and strong of lung;  
Living to sleep and cry;  
Standing the pygmies and elves among —  
Who doth the Kings defy?

Once I was fief to a Despot King,  
But the hours and the Seasons onward swing;  
And out of my life he passed one day,  
And the world was dark, and its skies were  
gray;  
And now at the last I know full well  
That all of peace for my soul did dwell  
In the baby voice that made me spring  
To do his bidding, my Despot King.

*Lays for Little Chaps*

---

Fair as a lily ; white and wee ;  
Holding my heart in thrall ;  
Oh, ghosts of the long dead years, to me  
My Despot King recall.



## *I Wish I Was an Engineer*



## I WISH I WAS AN ENGINEER

**I** WISH I was an engineer. I guess I'd  
like to stand  
In the cabin of an engine, with a thing-  
umbob in hand,  
And when I'd pull that thingumbob the engine  
then would go  
Out, out into the night-time when the stars is  
hangin' low ;  
I'd see the lights of houses goin' gleamin' gleam-  
in' past,

## *Lays for Little Chaps*

---

Like a last-campaign percession when it's  
walkin' middlin' fast;  
And then I'd pull the whistle-string an' hear  
the engine say:  
"Hey, there! you little mites of men, you'd  
better clear the way!"  
I would n't mind just loads of black upon my  
face and clothes  
If I could be an engineer, the land o' goodness  
knows!

I wish I was an engineer. Then boys would  
look at me,  
An' say: "Hey, Jimmy, here's de chap wot  
runs de engine. See!"  
An' then I'd pull the whistle-string an' never  
smile a bit  
When that big noise would scare the boys  
almost into a fit,  
Because I'd know, as engineers, I guess, 'most  
always do,  
That if a noise scares little boys, they're apt to  
like it, too.  
Just whiskin' through a hundred towns, straight  
onward hour by hour,  
While all the time the ceaseless "chug" beats  
out the Song of Power;

*I Wish I Was an Engineer*

---

Oh, you will talk admirin' of your Kings and  
Czars, maybe —  
To be an engineer, you bet! were good enough  
for me.



I wish I was an engineer, to sit there like a  
Turk  
An' smile to see the fireman sweat while doin'  
of the work.  
I s'pose that Emp'ers has a snap, to which, of  
course, they 're born,  
But if I was an engineer I'd look on them  
with scorn.  
Just sittin' in my cab up there and listenin' all  
the time

*Lays for Little Chaps*

---

Unto the constant "chug-chug-chug," that  
    ceaseless, mighty rhyme,  
And knowin' that a hundred lives was trusted  
    unto me,  
I guess I'd feel a sense of power ; I'd catch the  
    music's key  
And hear it singin' in my soul as down the  
    world I'd go,  
If I were but an engineer — But, then, I  
    ain't, you know.

IT'S HARD  
TO SAY



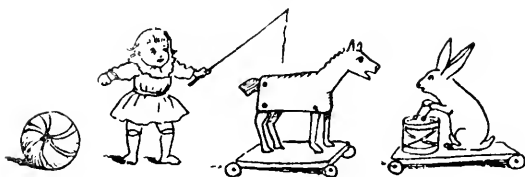
I MISS the patter-patter  
Of the tiny little feet ;  
I miss the prattled chatter ;  
I miss the kisses sweet.  
But I guess that Heaven 's lighter  
For the babe I laid to rest,  
And some angel's face is brighter  
As she holds her to her breast.

I knew not how to spare her ;  
E'en yet my heart is numb,  
For life held nothing fairer —  
Oh, wayward tears that come,  
Perhaps the Father sought her  
For His own home of light  
Because He felt without her  
No Heaven were perfect, quite.

*Lays for Little Chaps*

---

Sometimes from life's long battle  
I turn, and sit a while,  
And seem to hear her prattle  
And see my darling's smile.  
And then I say, "It's better.  
She missed the weary fray  
And Worry's chain and fetter ;"  
But, oh, it's hard to say.



It's hard to say, for ever  
My heart will listen still  
For prattle sounding never,  
For baby laughter's trill :  
And where the shadows gather  
I look to see her stand —  
My darling with the Father —  
And reach to take her hand.

I guess that Heaven's fairer  
Because my babe is there,  
But, oh, this life is barer,  
With naught to lighten care.



*It's Hard to Say*

---

I try to say, "It's better,"  
But, though my lips obey,  
They speak but form and letter,  
For, oh, it's hard to say.





A LITTLE,  
LITTLE FELLOW

**T**HERE 'S a little, little fellow, and he 's  
really very small,  
For he measures by my table and he  
is n't quite so tall ;  
And this little, little fellow in the evening  
seeks my knees,  
And he says : " Now won't oo tell me jns' the  
nicest `tories, p'ease ? "  
And then I tell him stories that I would n't  
dare to say  
Are of the usual run of things we meet on  
every day ;  
And the last thing that he asks me is, with  
story-telling through,  
" Now does oo 'pose when I'm growed up  
I'll know as much as oo ? "

*A Little, Little Fellow*

---

Oh, little, little fellow, who sit upon my knee,  
I know how all misplaced is this, the faith you  
rest in me.

My wisdom is a fiction, and my stock of knowl-  
edge small ;

Like you, I guess the Father knows, and He is  
over all.

I stumble on the journey, and I falter as I go,  
And where the days shall lead me, I never,  
never know.

But, though I'm all unworthy of your faith, it  
cheers me, too,

With "Does oo 'pose, when I'm growed up,  
I'll know as much as oo?"

Oh, little, little fellow, I really hope you will.  
I want to feel when I leave off you'll be ad-  
vancing still ;

And if sometimes I half have seen a light be-  
yond the mist,

I trust that by its purest rays your pathway  
may be kissed.

But, whatsoe'er the years may bring, and what-  
soe'er their lore,

Someway I'm hoping here to-night, as I have  
hoped before,

*Lays for Little Chaps*

---

That you may keep some part, at least, of faith  
in me you knew  
When oft you asked if "When I'm growed I'll  
know as much as oo."





## THE BABY'S FAITH

**W**E stood the other night before  
The little cottage that is home.  
I listened to her baby lore  
About the stars in yonder dome.  
'T was baby prattle, yet I guess  
Perhaps she knows as much as I —  
This side she knows a little less,  
But more of things beyond the sky.

Then, while she prattled on, a star  
A-sudden gleamed adown the world,  
As if some angel from afar  
A lance of flame had earthward hurled ;  
And baby looked, with sagest nod,  
As if to say : “ I see — I see ; ”  
Then smiling said : “ I dess 'at Dod  
Is frowin' stars down here to me.”

## *Lays for Little Chaps*

---

And then she paused. A mighty thought  
Was struggling in her baby mind :  
Suppose such fusillade were fraught  
With danger, as she half opined,  
What then ? what then ? At this "suppose"  
The blue eyes wide and wider grew ;  
Then faith spoke out : " I dess Dod knows  
He won't hurt baby — now don't 'oo ? "



Oh, little one, my little one,  
Give me the faith so wholly thine.  
When life's skies darken and the sun  
Is hidden from this soul of mine,  
And when God's missiles from His  
sky  
Rain on my life-path, blazing, all,  
Let faith to doubting then reply :  
" No harm from Him shall e'er befall."

And little one, my little one,  
If this sweet faith may ne'er be mine ;  
If still through fog of doubt I run  
And fear to trust the love divine,  
Yet none the less for you I pray —  
The heart speaks, though the lips be dumb —  
That Faith through all life's strife may say :  
" From Him, from Him no harm shall come."

*When Brother Stiggins Come to Tea*

---



WHEN BROTHER STIGGINS COME  
TO TEA

WHEN Brother Stiggins come to call,  
he gen'ly stayed to tea ;  
An' ma would wash our faces all, an'  
frequent'ly spank me,  
An' then she'd say, " You mus' be good, an' set  
still in your cheer,  
An' not ask twice fer things to eat when Brother  
Stiggins's here."  
An' then we'd go to table, an' the parson, he'd  
ask grace,  
An' 'bout that time my brother, he would make  
an orful face ;

## *Lays for Little Chaps*

---

Then I 'd jus' snicker, an' my ma — you ort her  
look to see,  
When Brother Stiggins come to call, an' when  
he stayed to tea.

I s'pose the grace he allers said was full ten  
minutes long,  
An' all the time his voice would sound a good  
deal like a song.  
He 'd ask the Lord to kindly heed the heathen  
in distress  
Who can't git chicken-pie like ours, an' other  
things that bless.  
An' then he 'd say: "Ef 't ain't too much, jus'  
bless our Congress, too;  
We know, dear Lord, there ain't a thing that  
You hain't power to do;  
An' bless us common folks —" An' then my  
brother, he 'd hunch me,  
An' 'neath the table we would fight, when he  
had come to tea.

An' then he 'd say: "Dear Lord, forgive these  
wicked little boys  
Who seem possessed, by Satan's power, to make  
a dretful noise.



*When Brother Stiggins Come to Tea*

---

Oh, let them not go down in wrath to wicked-  
ness an' sin,  
An' 'specially, dear Lord, forgive the one that  
kicked my shin."  
An' when that grace was ended, then my ma  
would leave her place,  
An' say, "Excuse me w'ile I 'tend to these here  
younguns' ease."  
An' then she'd take us to the shed, my brother  
Joe an' me,  
An' argue with us with a strap, when he had  
come to tea.

I don't blame ma ; I never did. We'd act like  
all possessed ;  
An' course it's wrong to make a row when  
things is bein' blessed ;  
An', too, it's right to ask a grace, fer grace is  
what we need  
To git along with folks we meet an' not run all  
to seed.  
But, still, consid'rin' that us boys was pretty  
middlin' young,  
An' seein' that the parson's prayer was mighty  
nearly sung,

*Lays for Little Chaps*

---

I now contend, an' allers shall, although per-  
haps I'm wrong,  
When Brother Stiggins come to tea his grace  
wus too blamed long.





HER FAITH NEVER FALTERS

**M**Y little daughter comes to me,  
And whispers, "I am sorry ;"  
And I — I take her on my knee  
And tell her not to worry ;  
And then I kiss her, and she knows  
How tenderly I love her.  
We're just two children, I suppose ;  
I not a whit above her.

And then she lays her cheek to mine,  
And says, "I love you dearly ;"  
And in my eyes the teardrops shine —  
My heart *will* act so queerly.  
She says, "My papa is so good,"  
Though I'm unworthy of her.  
Dear little type of maidenhood,  
I love her, oh, I love her.

*Lays for Little Chaps*

---

I think sometimes I'd like to go  
And tell her, "I am sorry,"  
For, oh, my feet do falter so  
'Mid life's unending worry.  
Dear, loyal heart! Suppose I should,  
(I have done so — or nearly)  
She'd only say: "My papa's good.  
I love him, oh, so dearly."

So, 'mid the storm of life and years,  
My little daughter's kisses  
And loyal faith have dried my tears,  
And cares exchanged for blisses.  
And, as I write, if tears will start,  
They're tears of gladness merely,  
For these words bless my weary heart:  
"I love my papa dearly."





WHEN MOTHER CALLED

**M**OTHER used to come and say :  
“Come little boy ; it’s time to rise.  
Wake right up without delay ;  
Shake yourself, and rub your eyes.”

An’ I’d say : “Huh ! Wha—Ye-e-es,” and  
then —

Go right off to sleep again.

Soon she’d come again and say,  
Just as gently as before :

“Wake, and see this lovely day.

Don’t go to sleep, dear, any more.”

An’ I’d say : “Yes — I’m — coming ;” then —

Go right off to sleep again.

*Lays for Little Chaps*

---

Did n't matter though ; no less  
Patient, gentle, kind was she  
When she came and said : " I guess  
My little boy asleep must be."  
An' I said : " I'll — get — up," and then —  
Went right off to sleep again.

Then my father came to call.  
'T was but little that he said ;  
Just one word, and that was all,  
Just one word, and that, "*Al-fied!*"  
Just one word, you see, but then —  
I did n't go to sleep again.



Just that difference !  
But, you see,  
I've been thinking,  
here alone,  
Could my mother now  
call me  
In the gentle, loving  
tone  
Of the past, I'd wake,  
and then —  
I would n't go to  
sleep again.



## THE SONG OF SONGS

**W**RITE me a song," said the Master,  
"that shall ring through the halls  
of time ;

A song that shall thrill my children and urge  
them to deeds sublime."

So the poet touched his wonderful harp and  
sung in a minor key

How out of Earth's care, and its travail, the  
soul rises pure and free ;

How under the face of laughter there throbbeth  
the heart of pain,

Yet he who doth battle and conquer, the  
heights of the blest shall gain.

He sang of the lesson of sorrow, the meaning  
of trouble and tears,

*Lays for Little Chaps*

---

And the guerlon that comes to the faithful  
after the strife of years.  
But the Master stood unmoved.

Then the poet struck his harp again, a wild,  
triumphant lay  
That told of the nations' battles, their ceaseless  
strife and fray ;  
And through it one saw the armies as they  
marched and countermarched,  
And heard the groans of the dying, the gurgle  
from lips pain-parched.  
Then he told in a sweeter, gentler strain that  
ravished the listening ear  
How the dear God loves His children, and cares  
for their struggles here,  
And how He will guide and lead them, after  
the toil and strife,  
Gently, oh, gently upward to the wonderful  
Hills of Life.  
But the Master stood unmoved.

Then the poet's soul was weary, and he sung  
of the brood of care  
Who dwell in the haunts and purlieus, with  
Want as a spectre there ;



### *The Song of Songs*

---

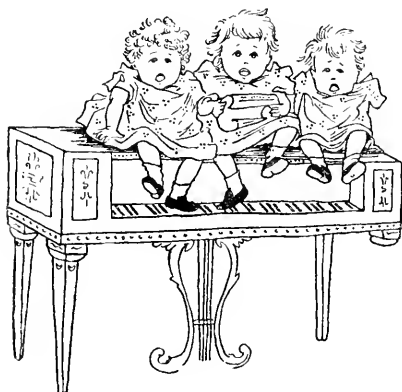
And the song that he sang was tragic ; it  
sobbed with a chord of pain  
For the haunted, the starved, the weary, whose  
tears fall down like rain ;  
And under the throbbing music was a male-  
diction heard  
For those who have wronged His children, and  
eyes with tear-drops blurred.  
There was loathing and stern abhorrence for  
these, the favored few,  
Who heed not the old, old message : Do as  
ye 'd have them do.  
But the Master stood unmoved.

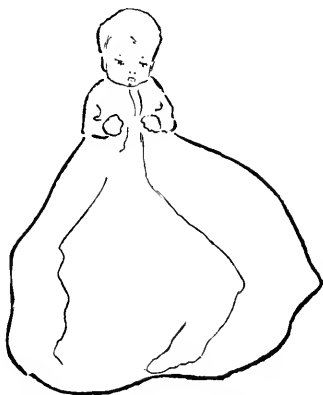
And then through the open doorway stole the  
sound of a childish voice,  
Ringing in happy laughter, making the soul  
rejoice,  
And the poet caught its music, for the laughter  
was dear to him,  
And his heart breathed out its story, though  
his eyes with tears were dim ;  
And, oh, the wonderful music ! It reached to  
the blue sky's dome,  
Telling of peace and gladness in the beautiful  
Land of Home,

### *Lays for Little Chaps*

---

Of the dear little feet that patter, of the lips  
that our own caress —  
For the poet forgot his heartache when his  
little one came to bless.  
And the Master's eyes were dim.





A SONG FOR THE BABIES

**N**OW here is a song for the babies, who  
Are dreadfully puzzled just what to  
do  
With their ten little fingers and ten little toes,  
Their two little ears, and their one little nose,  
And their queer little mouth, down under their  
eyes,  
Which they open to laugh, and straightway it  
cries,  
To the total surprise, and the wonder and  
doubt  
Of the wee little babies I'm singing about.

### *Lays for Little Chaps*

---

A song for the babies who lie and blink,  
And really imagine they 're trying to think,  
Thinking of things they can't understand,  
Of why they can't eat each chubby, fat hand ;  
For they eat it, and eat it — it ents such a  
“ figger ” —

And the more that they eat it, the more it  
grows bigger ;  
And this is enough, past a question or doubt,  
To puzzle the babies I 'm singing about.

A song for the babies who laugh and coo  
As only a baby knows how to do,  
And they talk in a language none understand  
Save those who have travelled in Babyland ;  
And the ones who have travelled, the babies  
know,  
Are only the mammas who love them so ;  
Though sometimes a papa can half make out  
The coo of the babies I 'm singing about.

A song for the babies — God bless them all,  
So pitiful helpless, so daintily small ;  
Who only can wonder what all is about,  
The hurry and bustle, the worry and doubt ;

## *A Song for the Babies*

---

Who only can wonder, and never can know  
Till dawnlight has faded and morning dews go.  
The babies, whose laughter sets trouble to  
rout —  
God bless the wee babies I'm singing about.





THE LITTLE BOY WHO SAW SANTA  
CLAUS

**T**HE chimney was so narrow, and the  
chimney was so small,  
And Santa Claus had grown so fat  
through summer and the fall,  
That when he brought his Christmas pack to  
give the youngsters cheer  
He just looked at that chimney, and he said:  
“ Oh, dear ! Oh, dear ! ”

*The Little Boy who saw Santa Claus*

---

And little Willie Wiggins, who was listening  
in his bed,  
Was very sorely troubled for he heard what  
Santa said,  
Till a pleasant thought came to him, and a  
happy smile he wore  
As he said: "I guess I'll invite him if he won't  
come in the door."

So little Willie Wiggins, in his little nightdress,  
crept  
From out the cosy nest in bed where mamma  
thought he slept;  
And the little bare feet pattered across the  
frozen floor;  
And the little fingers fumbled at the cold lock  
of the door;  
And the bolt squeaked out in anger: "I will  
never ope, because —"  
Just then the door flew open wide, and there  
stood Santa Claus!  
Such a funny, funny fellow, and with such a  
cheery grin,  
And Willie's heart went pit-a-pat as he said:  
"P'ease come in."

### *Lays for Little Chaps*

---

Then Santa Claus stepped back and tied his  
    reindeer to a post,  
While Willie stood beside the door and froze  
    and froze, almost.  
His face just beamed with laughter as straight-  
    way he came back ;  
And you should have seen the presents in his  
    lovely, lovely pack !  
And he picked up Willie Wiggins and hid him  
    in his coat,  
And Willie merely said, “ My-ee ! ” his pleasure  
    to denote.  
He really was so happy that he could n't well  
    say more  
At sight of all the presents Santa spread upon  
    the floor.

Then Santa kissed him gently, and said : “ Why,  
    bless your heart !  
It 's getting very, very late ; I fear that I must  
    start,  
For I 've many, many presents for a million  
    children more,  
Where the chimneys are not narrow, as I ascer-  
    tained before.”  
Then he hurried through the doorway, and he  
    scampered to his sled ;



*The Little Boy who Saw Santa Claus*

---

And Willie heard the sleigh-bells as he pattered  
off to bed,  
And in his dreams throughout the night he  
wore a smile, because —  
He was the only little boy who e'er saw Santa  
Claus.





SHE'S GONE  
AWAY

**L**IKE to take her in my arms ;  
Like to soothe her as I did,  
Shielding her from wee alarms,  
On my loving bosom hid ;  
Wish that I could hear her voice  
Ringing out in baby play,  
Calling on me to rejoice ;  
But I can't — she 's gone away.

Sorry that sometimes I said,  
“ Do go 'way ! You bother me.”  
Now there 's quietness instead.  
And I long to bothered be.

*She's Gone Away*

---

Why, I'd give the best I know  
Just to hear her romp and play,  
And I'd let my writing go,  
But I can't — she's gone away.

There were roses, great an' small,  
In her hand that day — that day ;  
She the sweetest bud of all —  
And she bothered me ! I say ;  
Used to bother me ! when I,  
I would give the daylight's grace  
Just to hear her romping nigh,  
Making riotous the place.

House is very quiet now,  
Very orderly and neat,  
Toys not lying anyhow,  
Pitfalls for my careless feet ;  
No one comes to worry me  
In my work, though  
oft forbid,  
Clam'rous for a throng-  
ing knee,  
But I wish — I wish  
she did.





OIL, LITTLE WEE MAIDEN

**O**H, little wee maiden, who sit and sing,  
Rocking yourself in a rockaby chair,  
What do the elfins who lazily swing  
On beams of the sunlight whisper you  
there?

What do they whisper, that straight from your  
heart,

A smile, creeping upward, illumines your  
eyes?

What do they weave in their magical art  
From gossamer strands that they steal from  
the skies?

Dreams of the future, castles that stand  
In the beautiful world of a far-away land ;  
Castles of crimson and purple and gold ;  
Dreams that the wonderful morrows enfold.

*Oh, Little Wee Maiden*

---

Oh, little wee maiden, the elfins take

The gold of the sunset, the crimson of skies  
That blush into sleep ere the morning shall  
wake

The world, oh, the world that is weary and  
wise ;  
And the gold and the crimson they build into  
dreams,

Into castles of splendor your eyes to delight ;  
And the moonlight or starlight still sparkles  
and gleams

On jewels God strikes from the bosom of  
night.

Sheen of the moonlight on diamonds of dew,  
All shining bright, little maiden, for you.  
All of the morrows still reaching away  
Nothing can bring like the dreams of to-day.

Oh, little wee maiden, your song sinketh low,

For the fairies of dreamland are calling,  
And soon shall my little one drowsily go

Where the sleeptide is rising and falling ;  
And the elfins that swing on a tremulous  
beam,

The last of the day that is dying,

*Lays for Little Chaps*

---

Kiss hands to you still in the vanishing gleam.

“Good night ” and “Good night ” they are  
sighing.

Elfin's will go and the dream fairies stay ;

This it is comes at the close of the day.

So come to me, little one, e'en as I write ;

One sweet kiss, my darling ; one more and  
—good night.





THE POOR LITTLE BIRDIES

**T**HE poor little birdies that sleep in  
the trees,  
Going rockaby, rockaby, lulled by  
the breeze ;  
The poor little birdies, they make me feel  
bad,  
Oh, terribly, dreadfully, dismally sad,  
For—think of it, little one ; ponder and  
weep —  
The birdies must stand when they sleep, when  
they sleep ;

And their poor little legs —  
I am sure it is so —  
They ache, and they ache,  
For they're weary, you know.

*Lays for Little Chaps*

---

And that is the reason that far in the night  
You may hear them say, "Dear-r-r!" if you  
listen just right,  
For the poor little birdies that sleep on the  
bough  
Would like to lie down, but they do not know  
how.

Just think of it, darling ; suppose you must  
stand  
On your wee brown legs, all so prettily  
planned ;  
Suppose you must stand when you wanted to  
sleep,  
I am sure you would call for your mamma and  
weep ;  
And your poor little legs, they would cramp, I  
have guessed,  
And your poor little knees, they would call for  
a rest ;

And you'd cry, I am sure,  
For so weary you'd be,  
And you'd want to lie down,  
But you could n't, you see ;



*The Poor Little Birdies*

---

And that is the reason why we should feel  
bad  
For the poor little birdies, who ought to be  
glad,  
For they want to lie down as they sleep on the  
bough ;  
They want to lie down, but they don't know  
how.





GIVE ME  
THE FABLES

**G**IVE me the fables, the old folk-lore  
Of the beautiful, mythical time,  
When I dreamed that the world was  
bright before

And its hills were easy to climb ;  
When Santa Claus came — I knew that he  
did —

My quota of presents to leave,  
And his sleigh-bells jingled my dreams amid,  
On the wonderful Christmas Eve.

Give me the fables — Oh, never a doubt  
Puzzled my sister and me ;  
We were certain that Santa was roaming with-  
out,  
And we laughed in our infantile glee

*Give Me the Fables*

---

Till mother came softly, and said: "You must  
sleep,

For Santa won't come till you do."

Oh, that was a statement to make the flesh  
creep,

So we tried hard to sleep — would n't you?



Give me the fables. Don't tell me our bliss

Was wholly a fanciful thrill,

For the morning brought proof of his visit, I  
wis,

Though you may dispute if you will.

The engine that tooted, the ball that we threw,

Till it landed the china amid —

If Santa Claus brought not these gifts to us  
two,

Will you please just to mention who did?

Give me the fables. Gray phantoms, at best,

Are the things that we label as real;

Our gold endures not in the ultimate test,

And fame is a mocker, we feel.

*Lays for Little Chaps*

---

But the cheer and the joy of the girl and the  
boy —

Oh, Life, you have taught me this :  
While others may grasp at your shining alloy,  
I will hold to the fable of — bliss.



A SONG FOR THE LITTLE CHAPS

**H**ERE is a song for the little chaps,  
The little wee fellows who don't  
know why  
The round world turns ; and I guess, perhaps,  
That neither do you and neither do I.  
Here is a song for the comical mites,  
Round and rosy and fat and sleek,  
Who gaze in amaze on the world's queer sights ;  
And here is the blessing I cannot speak.

Here is a song for the ones that gaze  
In queer consternation on finger and toe,  
And note they are moving in speechless amaze,  
And wonder who wound them and made the  
things go.

*Lays for Little Chaps*

---

The dear little fellows who deem mother's  
breast

Is all of the world, and a good world, too,  
I am singing to them, while they lie at rest ;  
And really what better is there to do ?

Here is a song for the babes that stand

Nearer to God than the grown folk do ;  
Fresh little buds from the Heaven-land

Who deem that the world is fair and new.  
Bundles of helplessness, dearer than all

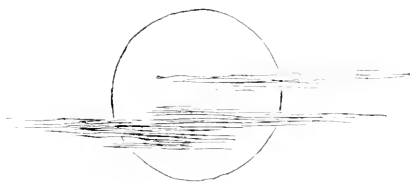
Yet born of the morning and kissed by its  
dew ;



Feeble and wondering, blinking  
and small,  
Babes whom I love, I am sing-  
ing to you.

*When Even Comes*

---



WHEN EVEN COMES

**W**HEN the even comes and the angels  
light

    Their lamps in the fields of heaven ;  
When the wee birds twitter : “ Good night,  
    good night ;

    It is rest time and nest time — ‘t is even,”  
Oh, then to their mothers the children creep,  
    For the poor little bodies are weary ;  
And they sing them and croon them all soundly  
    asleep :

    “ Oh, sleep thee, my dearie, my dearie.

“ Sleep thee, darling, sleep thee well ;

    Rock upon the Sleep Sea swell,

    Lost each baby sorrow.

Rest and peace press down thine eyes ;

Angels guard thee from the skies —

    Thou shalt wake to-morrow.”

### *Lays for Little Chaps*

---

When the even comes and our labor's done,  
And we're worn with our life's endeavor ;  
When faint is the light of our setting sun,  
And our hands are enfolded forever,  
Oh, then to our Father we children creep,  
For our hearts are so weary, so weary,  
And we hear His low voice through the life-  
giving sleep :

“ Oh, rest thee, my dearie, my dearie.

“ Rest thee, darling, rest thee well ;  
Here do love and blessing dwell,  
Lost each childish sorrow.



Lo, I hold thee to  
my breast ;  
Rest thee, dear  
one, sweetly  
rest —  
Here is Life's  
to-morrow.”





AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA

**D**O you think you'd like to be at the  
bottom of the sea,  
With the pollyhinkus swinging all  
around,  
And the goggles, with their eyes big as  
mamma's custard pies,  
And the winkus that goes crawling on the  
ground,  
And the s pry,  
(Oh, my eye!)  
The s pry, s pry, s pry,  
The very, very, very, very, s pry springaree  
That slides through the glare of the water  
everywhere  
On the shifting, lifting bottom of the deep  
blue sea?

*Lays for Little Chaps*

---

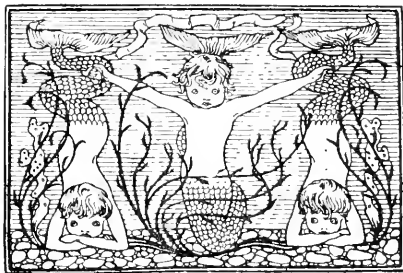
At the bottom of the sea there is strangest  
mystery,  
For the queen of all the sprites is living  
there,  
With amber beads for eyes, and she lives on  
oyster fries,  
And she hates to hear the wicked sailors  
swear ;  
And her hair,  
It is fair ;  
It is fair, fair, fair ;  
It is very, very, very, very, very bright and  
fair ;  
And the fishes swim about through her  
palace in and out,  
Through the shifting, lifting water that is  
everywhere.

But I want to tell you, dear, and I hope that  
you will hear,  
That really it is better to be living on the  
ground,  
Where the sights are not so queer, but the  
atmosphere is clear,  
And in order to enjoy it 't is n't needful to  
be drowned ;

*At the Bottom of the Sea*

---

For you know  
(It is so,  
And you should know, know )  
It is really, really chilly where the dim depths  
be :  
And it's surely very tough, yes, it certainly  
is rough,  
For you can't breathe a little in the deep blue  
sea.





DOROTHY'S  
WISDOM

**D**OROTHY'S the baby ; she's but a  
tiny tot,  
But, oh, she knows so many things  
that I have long forgot.  
She knows the thrill of laughter ; she knows  
its music, too,  
And when her cheery voice rings out I listen —  
would n't you ?

I listen, half-way smiling, and then it seems to  
me  
She knows just what the heaven is, and I've  
forgot, you see.  
But one thing she knows better, c'en better  
than the rest ;  
She knows — ah, well she knows it — that her  
mother loves her best.

*Dorothy's Wisdom*

---

I write it half in envy, for she is dear to me,  
And so I show her pictures as she sits upon my  
    knee ;  
And I try to tell their stories in the words at  
    my command.  
While she offers sage suggestions that I cannot  
    understand.  
I listen to her chatter just to learn what she  
    may tell ;  
I lay my siege unto her heart and think I'm  
    doing well,  
And, even as I think it, she leaves her throne  
    of rest  
And toddles to her mother, the one that loves  
    her best.

Oh, Dorothy, my baby, I think perhaps you're  
    right :  
There is no love like mother-love this side the  
    land of light.  
Though scanty be your knowledge of the path  
    that you must tread  
And though it be but baby lore that fills your  
    little head,  
Your wisdom is the highest when you seek your  
    mother still

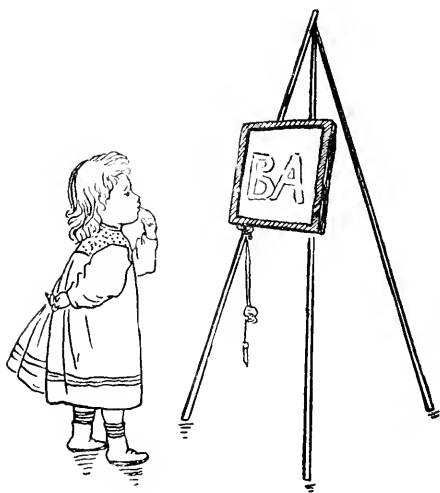
*Lays for Little Chaps*

---

And deem her safest refuge from your every  
baby ill.

I know that you are sagely right, yet grant my  
one request :

If mother-love be best of love, please count  
mine second best.





## THE TEACHER KNOWS

**O**NE time my teacher said, says she :  
“ It ’s no use talkin ’ ; seems to me  
That you ’re the worse boy that I ’ve  
got ;

You ’re worser than the rest, a lot.  
I ’ve whipped you, an’ I ’ve scolded, too ;  
Don’t make no difference what I do,  
You keep right on jus’ zif I ’d not.  
*Ain’t* you the worst boy that I ’ve got ? ”

## *Lays for Little Chaps*

---

An' then my teacher said, says she :  
" Your case is always puzzlin' me.  
Now don't you know it hurts me, too,  
When scoldin' or a-whippin' you ?



I always want you to be good  
An' actin' like a nice boy should,  
Because I love you." — Then she sighed,  
An' I — I — well, I up an' cried.

Since then my teacher's gone away,  
An' I don't go to school an' play,  
An' study some, 's I used to do  
Before my schoolin' days was through.



*The Teacher Knows*

---

But still my Teacher says, says He :  
“ I ’m teachin’ you as seems to me  
Is best ; with sorrow’s sting an’ blow  
I ’m teachin’ you the way to go.”

An’ then my Teacher says, says He :  
“ If only you ’ll look up to me  
Through eyes bedimmed with trouble’s rain,  
You ’ll learn the lesson hid in pain,  
An’ know, though cruel seems the blow,  
’T was dealt because I love you so.”  
An,’ though I ’m weary an’ oppressed,  
I guess my Teacher knows the best.



## SWIMMING ISN'T WHAT IT WAS

**O** H, swimming is n't what it was ;  
The times have changed since when  
I used to swim six times a day,  
And then — go in again.  
I did n't need a bathing suit  
In those old days of glee ;  
The bathing suit that nature gave  
Was good enough for me.

*Swimming Is n't What It Was*

---

And if one did n't like the buff,  
    Why, this thing can be said :  
The sun was always good enough  
    To partly paint it red.  
The boys don't duck me as they did  
    When I was three feet high,  
Nor dive beneath and pinch my legs —  
    Will some one tell me why ?

No more when I a swim have had  
    My mother says to me,  
“ You 've been in swimming, you bad boy ;  
    Your hair is wet, I see.”  
And I don't tell her as I did,  
    With heart inclined to thump,  
“ No, ma'am, I have n't swimm'd at all ;  
    I wet it at the pump.”

Ah, times have changed ; the stingful switch  
    No more is on my hide,  
As when my mother ascertained  
    Her youthful son had lied.  
She used to say : “ You 've been exposed  
    To sickness all untold,  
And this, I think, my little boy,  
    Will drive away a cold.”

## *Lays for Little Chaps*

---

And then she warmed me ! I recall  
That scene through vistas dim.  
She made it lively for a time ;  
But, then — I had my swim !  
Oh, golden days of long ago,  
Come back, come back again,  
For swimming is n't what it was ;  
The times have changed since then.





## MY FIRST AUTOGRAPH

**O**H, don't I remember — I guess that I do ! —

When you asked me to write in your book ?

The moon of December was piercing the blue,  
And the eyes of the stars seemed to look,  
As you stood in the shadow. Heigho ! but the  
world

Has gone whirling and whirling since then :  
But that was the night when the grass was  
impearled

By the dewdrops asleep in the glen.

Oh, don't I remember — I certainly do ! —

How I puzzled one-third of a night,  
Till the last dying ember had fallen in two,  
To make up my mind what to write ?

*Lays for Little Chaps*

---

Then I wrote ('t was n't new) : "The rose it is  
red,

And the meek little violet's blue,  
And the pink, it is sweet," — it was thus that I  
said —

" But not half so sweet as are you."

Oh, don't I remember — be sure that I do ! —

The staggering couplet I wrote ?

I could n't have claimed for a moment 't was  
new —

'T was my mother who told me to quote.

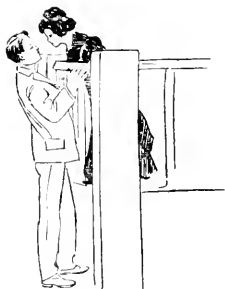
But one thing I'll say, as I look through the  
glow

Of the dawn, little maiden, to you :

Though I well might have written more sagely,  
I know,

I could n't have written more true.





MY LITTLE VALENTINE

**I**F I could write a valentine  
To please a little love of mine ;  
If I could catch some knack of metre  
To make her deem the music sweeter  
Than song of birds,  
The drone of bees,  
The loo of herds,  
The whisp'ring breeze.  
Why, I would write this valentine  
To please a little love of mine.

If I could write a valentine  
All worthy of this love of mine,  
Its tinkling words must sweetly beat  
To rhythm of her tripping feet ;

*Lays for Little Chaps*

---

And it must reach  
The perfect key  
Of baby speech  
That gladdens me ;  
But, as such art were never mine,  
I kiss, instead, my valentine.





## *Hushaby, Lullaby*

---



### HUSHABY, LULLABY

**H**USHABY, lullaby, my little men ;  
The Sandman comes, but he goes  
again.

Hushaby, lullaby, wee little maids ;  
The round world turns and it seeks the shades,  
And Sleep comes stealing adown, adown,  
And closes the eyes of blue or brown,  
And he weaves his net and it holds you  
thrall —

Hushaby, lullaby, little ones all.

Hushaby, lullaby. One little star  
Is peeping adown from afar, so far  
That its great white light is a slender beam  
When it reaches the world where the babies  
dream ;

## *Lays for Little Chaps*

---

A slender beam that can only kiss  
The wee little heads — for it came for this —  
Ere it dies away in a glimmer small —  
Hushaby, lullaby, little ones all.

Hushaby, lullaby. Life is a maze  
Where blindly we wander through wearisome  
days,  
Through wearisome days when the spirit is  
numb,  
Till out of the shadows the little ones come ;  
Then mothers stoop to them to kiss and caress,  
And the souls of the fathers they gladden and  
bless ;  
For straight from the heavens God's angels  
they call —  
Hushaby, lullaby, little ones all.





WHEN BABY BLOWETH KISSES

**W**HEN baby bloweth kisses  
From fingers pink and wee,  
Like some sweet rain of blisses  
To cheer my heart and me,  
I care not then how utter  
Or stern the day's demands,  
While I watch the flutter, flutter  
Of the waving little hands.

*Lays for Little Chaps*

---

When baby bloweth kisses  
To me, upon the street,  
She sometimes says : " Now zis is  
A kiss 'at 's *very* sweet : "  
And I tell her ere I leave her  
'T was better than the rest,  
And, faith ! I don't deceive her,  
For each of them is best.

When baby bloweth kisses,  
The bees that seek their store  
In blossoms' pink abysses,  
Might turn to her for more ;  
And, oh, her laughter ringeth  
Like some sweet fairy bell ;  
And, oh, my old heart singeth  
A song no words may tell.

When baby bloweth kisses —  
Ye men whose years increase,  
While life the pathway  
misses  
To summer lands of  
peace,  
Now tell me if there lingers  
Elsewhere a single bliss  
To match the little fingers  
That waft to you a kiss.









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